

Renewable Resources Extension Act – National Focus Fund Projects

FY 2010 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE: JUNE 8, 2010



**U.S. Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture**

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

RENEWABLE RESOURCES EXTENSION ACT – NATIONAL FOCUS FUND PROJECTS

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under **CFDA 10.500**.

DATES: Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on **JUNE 8, 2010** (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT: The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is requesting comments regarding this RFA from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and will be used to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). This section requires the Secretary to solicit and consider input on a current RFA from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, education and extension for use in formulating future RFAs for competitive programs. Written stakeholder comments on this RFA should be submitted in accordance with the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this Notice.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy and Oversight Branch; Office of Extramural Programs; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; USDA; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: RFP-OEP@nifa.usda.gov. (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the **Renewable Resources Extension Act-National Focus Fund Projects (RREA-NFF) RFA**.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA announces the availability of grant funds and requests applications for the **Renewable Resources Extension Act-National Focus Fund Projects** for fiscal year (FY) 2010 to provide for expanded and comprehensive extension programs for forest and rangeland renewable resources at a national, regional, or multi-institutional level. The amount available for support of this program in FY 2010 is approximately \$275,000.

This notice identifies the objectives for RREA-NFF projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a RREA-NFF grant. NIFA additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next RFA for this program.

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

The Renewable Resources Extension Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-306, 92 Stat. 349, 16 U.S.C. 1671 et seq.) provides for an expanded and comprehensive extension program for forest and rangeland renewable resources. The majority of the appropriated funds are distributed to eligible institutions based on a formula that considers the geographic extent, ecosystem productivity, economic contribution, and population for each state.

Since FY 2002, a small amount of these funds have been used to fund National Focus Fund Projects which have served to expand comprehensive extension programs for forest and rangeland renewable resources on a national, regional, or multi-institutional scale through better program coordination, innovative technologies, and extension models that can be easily duplicated.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The purpose of the grant program for FY 2010 is to provide funds for pilot projects that:

- (1) Address emerging forest and rangeland resource issues,
- (2) Have national or regional relevancy, and
- (3) Develop new and innovative projects that can be replicated at other institutions.

The goal of the Pilot Projects for Emergent Issues is to enhance the sustainability of the nation's forest and rangeland resources and to enable landowners and managers to achieve their desired goals and objectives. These projects must provide opportunities for the Cooperative Extension System to maximize its impact and demonstrate capacity and relevance by either indirectly or directly working across state boundaries to bring expertise to bear on common problems. Applications are being solicited for the RREA-NFF under the following areas:

(1) Forest continuity

Forests are an essential element to addressing the issues of climate change and renewable and secure energy. Forests are the nation's single largest carbon sink and their importance in mitigating and adapting to climate change continue to be documented. Forests have the potential to provide a sustainable and significant quantity of biomass for direct combustion for electricity production, ethanol for vehicle use, and numerous cellulosic-based chemicals. In the U.S. 11.1 million private, small-scale forest landowners own 379 million acres, or 50% of the nation's forestland. Retaining the nation's forests, as a land cover type, is a critical first step in utilizing forests to address climate change mitigation and renewable energy.

Significant changes in forested landscapes are occurring. Family-owned forestland is being transferred to the next generations and in the process it is often converted to non-forest uses. Forestland is also being converted to other uses based on societal and market demand for housing and economic development. Applications are requested for highly innovative extension programs that focus on efforts to retain forest cover to mitigate climate and environmental

changes and for potential use as energy feedstocks. Project innovation must be demonstrated through new and unique partnerships, audiences, topics and/or delivery methods. Regional relevance and partnerships must be demonstrated. Regional partners must participate either through direct delivery of extension programs, or in the transfer of the program approach and content beyond the initial project area.

(2) Rangelands, drought and climate change

Drought is a normal part of climate and a recurring event throughout the world. Since it is frequently widespread and can cover several regional climatic areas, inconsistent levels of drought severity can occur from one region to another. Effects of drought often accumulate slowly over a considerable period of time and may linger for years after its termination. Drought vulnerability can influence food security and the ability to meet the nutritional needs of a population, agricultural and environmental sustainability, and socioeconomic stability. Generally, the common response to drought is reactive rather than proactive, often ineffective, and untimely—usually leading to increased dependency on government and other organizations, and creating greater vulnerability through disincentives to adopt best management practices. Shifting from crisis management to drought preparedness often is difficult because little institutional capacity exists in most settings to alter this paradigm.

Drought preparedness is a widely accepted tool for governments at all levels to manage and reduce drought-related risks. In the U.S., drought preparedness is planned by local, state, regional, and tribal governments to focus efforts towards monitoring and forecasting, risk assessment and early warning, and mitigation and response. Drought preparedness on rangelands requires that producers no longer consider drought as an extreme event, but plan for drought as part of their normal management. Planning for drought-sensitive and impacted areas, the role and impact of global change, alternative grazing practices, decision support for reseeding and rangeland plant choices, marketing issues, recognizing the “warning signs” of drought, real time analysis of drought conditions, forecasting “short-term” vs. “long-term” droughts, development of social and economic indicators and public acceptance of planning and behavior change are all critical parts of drought preparedness. Rangeland productivity and watershed health are particularly susceptible to drought, and require specific steps in a drought preparedness plan (DPP) that differ from plans that cover emergency actions once drought is declared, for intensive agriculture or urban and urbanizing areas. This call for proposals involves the development of an extension education program focused on drought preparedness for rangeland ecosystems that results in a modified DPP that links to existing state(s) plan(s); OR taking the next step with an existing DPP—what extension education is needed to move the existing plan to a new level of efficiency, function, and adoption that benefits rangeland productivity and watershed health?

Project innovation must be demonstrated through new and unique partnerships, audiences, topics and/or delivery methods. Regional relevance and partnerships must be demonstrated. Regional partners must participate either through direct delivery of extension programs, or in the transfer of the program approach and content beyond the initial project area.

C. Program Area Description

For FY 2010 funds will be available for support of the two (2) priorities described in Section B above. The maximum amount that applicants can request is **\$100,000**.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. Approximately **\$275,000** is available to fund applications in FY 2010.

Awards issued as a result of this RFA will have designated the Automated Standard Applications for Payment System (ASAP), operated by the Department of Treasury's Financial Management Service, as the payment system for funds. For more information see http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/method_of_payment.html.

B. Types of Applications

– In FY 2010, applications may be submitted to the **RREA-NFF** Program for the following type of request:

(1) New application. This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the **RREA-NFF** Program. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

C. Project Types

The following are NIFA funding estimates for FY 2010, number of awards anticipated, maximum annual project budgets, and acceptable project periods for the RREA-NFF program area.

Program Area	Funding Estimate FY 2010	Number of Awards Anticipated FY 2010	Maximum Project Budget	Acceptable Project Period
1. Forest Continuity	\$100,000	1-2	100,000	12-24 months
2. Rangelands, Drought and Climate Change	100,000	1-2	100,000	12-24 months
3. RREA-NFF Project - Sustaining the Nation's Working Forest and Rangeland Resources for Future Generations*	45,000	1	45,000	24 months
4. Forest and Rangeland Ecosystems and Their Wildlife and Fisheries Resources*	38,000	1	38,000	24 months

*** NOTE: The table above includes funds for continuation projects competed in FY 2009.**

At a minimum, Project Directors are expected to attend and present their projects and accomplishments as submitted papers to the appropriate Biennial Conference of the Association of Natural Resources Extension Professionals (ANREP). Additional conference presentations may also be utilized but not substituted for the ANREP Conference without approval to do so to the Program Contact.

Reasonable costs for Conferences may be included in the Budget. Please refer to Part IV, B.6. for further instructions.

The start date for all projects will be September 1, 2010.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may be submitted by 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions.

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project. An applicant's failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of an application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

NIFA does not require matching support for this program and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Electronic Application Package

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov to NIFA in response to this RFA.

Prior to preparing an application, it is suggested that the PD/PI first contact an Authorized Representative (AR)(also referred to as Authorized Organizational Representative or AOR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grant.gov. If the organization is not prepared, the AR should see http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp for steps for preparing to submit applications through Grants.gov.

The steps to access application materials are as follows:

1. In order to access, complete and submit applications, applicants must download and install a version of Adobe Reader compatible with Grants.gov. This software is essential to apply for CSREES Federal assistance awards. For basic system requirements and download instructions, please see http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp. To verify that you have a compatible version of Adobe Reader, Grants.gov established a test package that will assist you in making that determination. Grants.gov Adobe Versioning Test Package:
<http://www.grants.gov/applicants/AdobeVersioningTestOnly.jsp>.
2. The application package must be obtained via Grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov>, click on “Apply for Grants” in the left-hand column, click on “**Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions,**” enter the funding opportunity number **USDA-NIFA-OP-003116** in the appropriate box and click “Download Package.” From the search results, click “Download” to access the application package.

Contained within the application package is the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov.” This Guide contains an introduction and general Grants.gov instructions, information about how to use a Grant Application Package in Grants.gov, and instructions on how to complete the application forms.

If assistance is needed to access the application package (e.g., downloading or navigating Adobe forms), refer to resources available on the Grants.gov Web site first (<http://www.grants.gov/>). Grants.gov assistance is also available as follows:

Grants.gov customer support

Toll Free: 1-800-518-4726

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Closed on [Federal Holidays](#).

Email: support@grants.gov

See <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/electronic.html> for additional resources for applying electronically.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Electronic applications should be prepared following Parts V and VI of the document entitled “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov.” This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following is **additional information** needed in order to prepare an application in response to this RFA. If there is discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.

Note the attachment requirements (e.g., portable document format or PDF) in Part III section 3. of the Guide. ANY PROPOSALS CONTAINING NON-PDF DOCUMENTS WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM NIFA REVIEW. Partial applications will be excluded from NIFA review. With documented prior approval, resubmitted applications will be accepted until close of business on the closing date in the RFA.

If you do not own PDF-generating software, Grants.gov provides online tools to assist applicants. Users will find a link to “Convert Documents to PDF” on <http://grants.gov/assets/PDFConversion.pdf>.

1. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 2. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

2. SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 3. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

3. R&R Other Project Information Form

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 4. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract. The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the goals of RREA-NFF.

b. Field 8. Project Narrative – **PDF Attachment. 12-Page Limit.**

PLEASE NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed twelve (12) pages (all of which must be numbered sequentially) of written text, figures and tables regardless of whether it is single or double spaced. This maximum (12 pages) has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. **Applications that exceed the page limit will be excluded from NIFA review. The Project Narrative must conform to the required sections for each priority area, and must be clearly labeled to include all of the sections listed below, as applicable. Incomplete applications (e.g., missing sections, incorrect sequence) will be excluded from NIFA review.**

The Project narrative must include all of the following components:

Introduction. The first sentence must state the priority (from Part I, Section B) that the proposal addresses. The introduction should include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives of the proposed project. Justify the need for the project by identifying the target audience(s) and explaining their needs. Describe the applicant's expertise in the topic and in serving the target audience(s).

(1) Rationale and Significance. Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed project. Discuss the potential long-range impacts of the project on the project. Any new or novel ideas that the proposed project offers should be discussed in this section. Demonstrate feasibility of the project through preliminary and current data.

(2) Objectives. Include clear, concise, complete and logically arranged objective statements.

(3) Approach. The activities proposed or problems being addressed must be clearly stated and the approaches being applied directly. This section must include:

- A description of the activities proposed and the sequence in which the activities are to be performed;
- Explanation as to how the project meets the requirement for innovativeness and regional relevance;
- How, when, and where the activities will be provided;
- Expected outputs;
- Expected outcomes;
- A full explanation of materials, procedures, or activities that will be undertaken to enhance the potential for replication beyond the project area (Letters of Commitment for Project Replication in other locations, states, or region must be submitted as Appendices and will not be included in the 12-page limit for the Project Narrative);
- A brief timeline of the proposed project; and
- An evaluation plan for determining the success of the project activities.

4. R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 5. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

5. R&R Personal Data – As noted in Part V, 6. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide, the submission of this information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award. **PLEASE DO NOT PROVIDE THE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OF THE PROJECT DIRECTOR/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR.**

6. R&R Budget

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 7. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

At a minimum, Project Directors are expected to attend and present their projects and accomplishments as submitted papers to the appropriate Biennial Conference of the Association of Natural Resources Extension Professionals (ANREP). Additional conference presentations may also be utilized, but not substituted for the ANREP Conference without approval to do so by the Program Contact. Project Directors should include reasonable costs for conference travel in the project budget.

NIFA does not require matching support for this program and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

7. Supplemental Information Form

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part VI, 1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. Field 2. Program Code. Enter the program code name, **Renewable Resource**, and the program code, **ME**.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Instructions for submitting an application are included in Part IV, Section 1.9 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by COB on **JUNE 8, 2010** (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

Correspondence regarding submitted applications will be sent using e-mail. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accurate e-mail addresses, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance.

If the AR has not received correspondence **from NIFA** regarding a submitted application within 30 days of the established deadline, please contact the Program Contact identified in Part VII of the applicable RFA and request the proposal number assigned to the application. **Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.**

D. Funding Restrictions

NIFA has determined that grant funds awarded under this authority may not be used for the renovation or refurbishment of research, education, or extension space; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such space; or the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.

Section 7132 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act (FCEA), amended section 1462 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977(NARETPA) [7

U.S.C. 3310(a)], limits indirect costs to 22 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award. Therefore, when preparing budgets, applicants should limit their requests for recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of their institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 22 percent of total Federal funds awarded. If no rate has been established the applicant may indicate "None—will negotiate" and a reasonable dollar amount for indirect costs may be requested, which will be subject to approval by USDA. In the latter case, if a proposal is recommended for funding, an indirect cost rate proposal must be submitted prior to award to support the amount of indirect costs requested. CSREES will request an indirect cost rate proposal and provide instructions, as necessary. An applicant may elect not to charge indirect costs and, instead, use all grant funds for direct costs. If indirect costs are not charged, the phrase "None requested" should be written in this space.

E. Other Submission Requirements

The applicant should follow the submission requirements noted in the document entitled "A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov."

Described below are the requirements for successful submission of an application, all of the following steps must be met for an application to be considered for peer review:

- 1) Meeting the deadline: To electronically send the application to Grants.gov the submit button is hit, which triggers a date and time stamp on the application. The date and time stamp is used to determine whether the application was received by Grants.gov before the deadline, which is prior to close of business (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time) on **JUNE 8, 2010**. An application submitted or resubmitted after the deadline is late. Consideration of late applications is only given in extenuating circumstances (e.g., natural disasters, confirmed Grants.gov outage) with proper documentation and support of the Agency Contact (see Part VII). The occurrence of one of these situations does not automatically ensure that a late application will be accepted. If an applicant wants a late application considered under an extenuating circumstance, the applicant should contact the Agency Contact accordingly.
- 2) Successful Grants.gov validation: The Grants.gov system performs a limited check of the application, and applicants are notified by Grants.gov of the outcome of the initial review. Applications meeting Grants.gov requirements are made available to the funding agency for further processing. Applications that fail Grants.gov validation may be resubmitted to Grants.gov if the original agency deadline has not passed. (Note that the Grants.gov system may allow applications to be submitted after the deadline has passed, but the application is considered late by NIFA.)
- 3) Successful Agency validation: NIFA staff perform precursory review of the application. The agency validation process includes, for example, meeting eligibility requirements and

following agency application guidelines (e.g., formatting, page limitations, limits on budget requests). Applicants are notified by NIFA of the outcome of this review.

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

Each application will be evaluated in a 2-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, applications that meet these requirements will be technically evaluated by a review panel.

Reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) the level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs; (d) the need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations; (e) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and (f) the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application.

B. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA. Applications that are strong in all three (3) areas below will be given priority for RREA-NFF funding.

1. Project Merit
 - Proposed objectives and outcomes are clearly described, adequate and appropriate;
 - Proposed approach, procedures, or methodologies are innovative, original, clearly defined and feasible; and
 - Expected outcomes are clearly stated, measurable and achievable.
2. Project Relevance
 - Adequacy of proposal in response to items required in the Project Narrative;
 - Stakeholders and partners play an active role in setting project direction;
 - Planning and implementing methods for evaluating success of project activities and documenting potential impact against measurable short and mid-term outcomes; and
 - Demonstration of feasibility through preliminary and current data.
3. Qualifications of Project Personnel, Adequacy of Facilities, and Project Timeline and Management

- Roles of key personnel are clearly defined;
- Key personnel have exemplary expertise to complete the proposed project;
- Project personnel have extensive, documented experience in developing, leading, managing and evaluating extension programs;
- Detailed, logical, and achievable timeline of project activities from project initiation through project completion and submission of final report; and
- Evidence of institutional capacity, competence and experience in the proposed area of work is provided.

C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution shall be determined by reference to the current Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 648, Falls Church, Virginia 22042. Phone: (703) 532-2300. Web site: <http://www.hepinc.com>.

Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants.

D. Organizational Management Information

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted on a one time basis, with updates on an as needed basis, as part of the responsibility determination prior to the award of a grant identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another NIFA program. NIFA will provide copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the pre-award process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors which may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official of NIFA shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the awarding official of NIFA as the effective date of the grant shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. It should be noted that the project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by NIFA under this RFA shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's assistance regulations (parts 3015 and 3019 of 7 CFR).

B. Award Notice

The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the following:

- (1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the Director has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;
- (2) Title of project;
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PDs chosen to direct and control approved activities;
- (4) Identifying award number assigned by the Department;
- (5) Project period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;
- (6) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Director during the project period;
- (7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;
- (8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
- (9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> to view NIFA award terms and conditions);

(10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and

(11) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by NIFA to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular award.

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several Federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and to project grants awarded under this program. These include, but are not limited to:

7 CFR Part 1, subpart A—USDA implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

7 CFR Part 3—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-129 regarding debt collection.

7 CFR Part 15, subpart A—USDA implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

7 CFR Part 331 and 9 CFR Part 121—USDA implementation of the Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002.

7 CFR Part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., OMB Circular Nos. A-21 and A-122 (2 CFR Parts 220 and 230), and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

7 CFR Part 3017—USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement).

7 CFR Part 3018—USDA implementation of Restrictions on Lobbying. Imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans.

7 CFR Part 3019—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations (2 CFR Part 215).

7 CFR Part 3021—Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance).

7 CFR Part 3052—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Nonprofit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3407—NIFA procedures to implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

7 CFR 3430—Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Grant Programs--General Grant Administrative Provisions.

29 U.S.C. 794 (section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and 7 CFR Part 15b (USDA implementation of statute) —prohibiting discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap in Federally assisted programs.

35 U.S.C. 200 et seq. —Bayh Dole Act, controlling allocation of rights to inventions made by employees of small business firms and domestic nonprofit organizations, including universities, in Federally assisted programs (implementing regulations are contained in 37 CFR Part 401).

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

Grantees are required to submit initial project information and annual and summary reports to NIFA's Current Research Information System (CRIS). The CRIS database contains narrative project information, progress/impact statements, and final technical reports that are made available to the public. For applications recommended for funding, instructions on preparing and submitting project documentation will be provided to the applicant by the agency contact. Documentation must be submitted to CRIS before NIFA funds will be released. Project reports will be requested by the CRIS office when required. For more information about CRIS, visit <http://cris.nifa.usda.gov>.

Annually, each grantee must submit a CRIS AD-421 Progress Report (OMB No. 0524-0042) and a one-page “popular” accomplishment report, prepared in Word or PDF format. The format and guidelines regarding the content of the popular report will be provided by the RREA Program Managers to the Project Directors of funded projects.

Additionally, when the project is complete, the grantee is required to submit a Final Technical Report to the NIFA National Program Leaders, Renewable Resources Extension Act. The Final Technical Report should summarize all work conducted and detail the outcomes, accomplishments and outputs of the funded project. This report should not exceed 15 single-spaced, typed pages.

At a minimum, Project Directors are expected to attend and present their projects and accomplishments as submitted papers to the appropriate Biennial Conference of the Association of Natural Resources Extension Professionals (ANREP). Additional conference presentations may also be utilized, but not substituted for the ANREP Conference without submitting a specific request to do so to the Program Contact.

Additional annual reports may be requested to provide timely information for the Secretary of Agriculture and Congress. The agency contact below will request additional reports as needed.

For informational purposes, the “Federal Financial Report,” Form SF-425, consolidates into a single report the former Financial Status Report (SF-269 and SF-269A) and the Federal Cash Transactions Report (SF-272 and SF-272A). The [NIFA Agency-specific Terms and Conditions](#) include the requirement that Form SF-425 is due on a **quarterly basis no later than 30 days following the end of each reporting period. A final “Federal Financial Report,” Form SF-425, is due 90 days after the expiration date of this award.**

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACTS

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Dr. Eric R. Norland, National Program Leader, Forest Resource Management; Natural Resources and Environment Unit:
Telephone: (202) 401-5971; E-mail: enorland@nifa.usda.gov

or

Dr. James Dobrowolski, National Program Leader, Rangeland and Grassland Ecosystems;
Natural Resources and Environment Unit; Telephone: (202) 401-5016; E-mail:
jdobrowolski@nifa.usda.gov.

Fax Number for both contacts is: (202) 401-1706.

Mailing Address for both contacts: National Institute of Food and Agriculture; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2210; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2210

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Access to Review Information

Copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments will be sent to the applicant PD after the review process has been completed.

B. Use of Funds; Changes

1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility

Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, the awardee may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

2. Changes in Project Plans

a. The permissible changes by the awardee, PD(s), or other key project personnel in the approved project shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other similar aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the project's approved goals. If the awardee or the PD(s) is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) for a final determination. The ADO is the signatory of the award document, not the program contact.

b. Changes in approved goals or objectives shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests for such changes be approved which are outside the scope of the original approved project.

c. Changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes.

d. Transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not Federal funds are involved, shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

e. The project period may be extended by NIFA without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the ADO determines may be necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed any applicable statutory limit or expiring appropriation limitation. Any extension of time shall be conditioned upon prior request by the awardee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of award.

f. Changes in Approved Budget: Unless stated otherwise in the terms and conditions of award, changes in an approved budget must be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to instituting such changes, if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or award.

C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of NIFA transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be retained by the Agency for a period of three years. Other copies will be destroyed. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

D. Regulatory Information

For the reasons set forth in the final Rule related Notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V (48 FR 29114, June 24, 1983), this program is excluded from the scope of the Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this Notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0039.

E. Definitions

Please refer to 7 CFR 3430, Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Grant Programs--General Grant Administrative Provisions, for the applicable definitions for this NIFA grant program.

For the purpose of this program, the following additional definitions are applicable:

Popular Report means a one (1) page synopsis of program accomplishments written for the general public. It contains the institutions' logos, photographs of program activities, quotations from program participants, and contact information for the Project Director. The report is submitted in Word format to the RREA Program Managers.

Rangeland is land on which the native vegetation (climax or natural potential) is predominantly grasses, grass-like plants, forbs or shrubs suitable for grazing or browsing use. Rangelands include natural grassland, savannas, most deserts, tundra, alpine plant communities, coastal marshes, wet meadows and introduced plant communities managed like rangeland.